

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 03739 271028Z

17

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 EB-07 OFA-01 SCA-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 IO-10 OMB-01 DLOS-03 (ISO) W

----- 082578

O R 271003Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0285

INFO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3739

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, CH

SUBJECT: CAPTURE OF ROK FISHING BOAT

REF: A. COMUSKOREA 242205Z MAY 75 (NOTAL)

B. SEOUL 3031 OF MAY 13, 1974

1. REF A REPORTED SEIZURE AND ABDUCTION OF ROK FISHING VESSEL BY APPROXIMATELY TEN PRC FISHING BOATS IN AREA ROUGHLY 130 MILES SOUTH SOUTHWEST OF ROK ISLAND OF SOHUKSAN IN EAST CHINA SEA IN EARLY MORNING HOURS OF MAY 25. VESSEL HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH FRIENDLY FORCES BY RADIO AT TIME OF CAPTURE BUT HAS NOT BEEN HEARD FROM SINCE.

2. ACCORDING TO MOFA NORTHWEST ASIA DIVISION CHIEF KWON PYONG-HYON, ROK ON MAY 25 REQUESTED JAPAN TO APPROACH PRC ON ITS BEHALF TO VERIFY REPORTED CAPTURE AND ASCERTAIN WHEREABOUTS OF VESSEL AND ITS CREW.

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JAPANESE INFORMED KOREANS MAY 27 THAT THEY HAD BEEN

IN CONTACT WITH CHINESE BUT HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED
RESPONSE FROM PRC.

3. KWON SAID THIS IS FIRST KNOWN INSTANCE OF CHINESE
ABDUCTING A ROK VESSEL ON THE HIGH SEAS, ALTHOUGH THEY
TOOK SEVERAL JAPANESE FISHING BOATS IN EARLY
NINETEEN-FIFTIES. MOREOVER, IT IS FIRST CASE OF
FRICTION BETWEEN PRC AND ROK FISHERMEN, SINCE PRC
WARNING IN MAY OF LAST YEAR THAT ROK FISHING BOATS
MUST CEASE CAUSING "INCIDENTS." (REF B). KWON
RECALLED THAT ROKS HAD PUBLICLY STATED THAT PRC

CHARGES LAST YEAR HAD BEEN UNTRUE BUT THAT FISHERMEN
HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO INCREASE PRECAUTIONS AGAINST
INCIDENTS. HE SAID THAT HEIGHTENED PRECAUTIONS INCLUDED
KEEPING PRUDENT DISTANCE FROM CHINESE BOATS. ALTHOUGH
ABDUCTION APPARENTLY TOOK PLACE IN SAME AREA WHERE
FRICTION HAD ARISEN LAST YEAR, KWON OBSERVED THAT
VESSELS OF TWO NATIONS COMMONLY INTERMIX AND IN
FACT ANOTHER ROK BOAT WAS FIVE MILES AWAY FROM THE
ABDUCTED ONE BUT WAS NOT MOLESTED.

4. ALTHOUGH ROK PRESS HAS GIVEN STORY FRONT-PAGE
COVERAGE, KWON SAID THAT MOFA WOULD PREFER TO AVOID
PUBLICITY. ROKG IS CONCERNED OVER IMPLICATIONS OF THIS
UNPRECEDENTED CHINESE ACTION BUT WISHES TO GIVE PRC
TIME TO RESPOND BEFORE MAKING ANY PUBLIC PROTEST.
KWON NOTED THAT PRC MEDIA HAVE APPARENTLY NOT MENTIONED
THE INCIDENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SHIP DETENTION, FISHING BOATS, TERRITORIAL WATERS VIOLATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: johnsorg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SEOUL03739
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750185-0612
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750516/aaaaaomz.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 COMUSKOREA 242205Z, 75 MAY 75
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: johnsorg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 JUL 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <14 NOV 2003 by johnsorg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CAPTURE OF ROK FISHING BOAT
TAGS: PFOR, KS, CH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006